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SUBJECT: TWO VIEWS ON SOMALILAND: HOSTILE FORCES TARGET
ECONOMY, NO RETURN TO A UNITED SOMALIA

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES LARRY E. ANDRE FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND
(d)

¶1. (C) In a August 1 meeting, the Charge d'Affaires (CDA) and Poloff met with Amcit Youssouf Oday, a part-time resident of Hargeysa, Somaliland, who stressed that "hostile forces" in Somaliland are implementing Qstrategic plan to dominate the economy as part of a wider agenda to gain political influence in the Horn of Africa. Oday lamented the absence of the United States in Somaliland, saying the "hostile forces" are taking advantage of our absence. Oday observed that radical clerics from outside Somaliland are buying into the economy with the help of partners from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Mogadishu. They are, he noted, positioning themselves across all major sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, banking, hotels, import/export, catering, and agriculture.

¶2. (C) The CDA asked Oday why the Somaliland government permits these "extremists" to operate in the country. Oday responded that although their numbers are relatively few, the "extremists" are gaining trust by creating jobs. Oday also said they bribe police if necessary. He remarked that Somaliland is worse off now than five years ago due to a weakened Somaliland government composed, he said, of "underqualified ministers." Oday added that these "radicals," many of whom were Eastern bloc-trained former Somalia military officers, have a strong bias against anyone with a "Western" education.

¶3. (C) The CDA asked Oday his views on Somaliland's prospects of gaining international recognition as an independent state. Oday responded that Somalilanders will never go back to Somalia after what happened to them under Siad Barre. He said they would rather die fighting than become part of Somalia. "With or without recognition, they will never agree to go back to Somalia."

¶4. (C) As regards to thwarting "hostile forces" influence in Somaliland, Oday championed the return of Somalilanders from abroad who can compete with the "radicals" for commercial and political influence. The expatriates, he said, are educated and know how to do business.

¶5. (C) During a subsequent meeting with Djibouti's Minister of Communication, Ali Abdi Farah, the CDA heard similar sentiments in support of Somaliland recognition. The Minister said that Somaliland's democracy is among the most vibrant on the continent. He noted that in the very close election for President, the losing candidate graciously conceded defeat. "How open do you see that, anywhere in the world?" he asked. The Minister stressed that while Somalilanders wish their

southern neighbors well, "there is no going back, ever."

16. (C) As for Somalia, he expressed exasperation with "Yusuf and Gedi's inability to distinguish between moderate and extremist Islamic Court leaders, and their unwillingness to extend a hand to the moderates."

ANDRE